

FILE APPEARED
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3 February, 1985**Former Carter Aide Speaks Out****Stand by U.S. on Hostages Assailed**By R. GREGORY NOKES, *Associated Press*

STAT

WASHINGTON—A "mad as hell" Hodding Carter III wishes President Jimmy Carter's Administration had handled the kidnapping of Americans the way the Reagan Administration has, saying nothing that would reveal the United States is "utterly impotent" to force their release.

The Carter Administration's credibility suffered a grievous blow because its agonizing public efforts to free the 53 American hostages in Iran failed, while Reagan has remained virtually silent—without hurting his image—on the plight of five Americans being held hostage in Lebanon.

"I'm bitter about it," said Carter, who was the State Department spokesman during most of the long Iranian hostage ordeal. "This Administration has proved itself to be utterly impotent, and they are getting away with it because they refuse to talk about it."

5 Hostages Named

The five being held in Lebanon are: Jeremy Levin, a correspondent for Cable News Network; William Buckley, an American diplomat; the Rev. Benjamin Wier, a Presbyterian minister; Peter Kilburn, a librarian at American University in Beirut and the Father Lawrence Jenco, head of Catholic Relief Services in Beirut.

The kidnapers are apparently demanding that all Americans leave Lebanon. They also apparently want the release of the suspected terrorists being held in Kuwait for the 1983 bombing of the American embassy and other installations there. Lately, they have threatened to put the five Americans on trial as subversives.

Although rejecting the terrorists' demands, the Administration has said virtually nothing about efforts to free them, a sharp contrast to Carter's response to Iranian hostage-taking. During Jimmy Carter's hostage crisis yellow ribbons were put on trees, the national Christmas tree was kept dark and the President delayed campaigning for his party's nomination for re-election, although he won it anyway.

"If I were to do it all over again, I would do it that way," said Hodding Carter III, referring to the Reagan approach. But he said, "I'm mad as hell" that Reagan, who criticized Carter over Iran, is himself escaping criticism when the end result is no different.

"They are still being held," he said in an interview. "One approach is not working better than the other." He also said the Reagan approach of "quiet diplomacy" may mean that nothing is being done, although Administration officials dispute this.

The Administration's silence has extended even to concealing the fact that a videotape picturing three of the Americans was received at the State Department last July. A second videotape of one of the hostages was received Monday by Visnews, a British television news agency.

A State Department terrorist expert confirmed that a first tape had been received in July and that a decision was made not to publicize it, although he said families of

the victims were notified.

"We didn't want to repeat the mistakes made during the Iranian hostage-taking," said the official, who spoke on condition he not be identified. "The Carter Administration made such an issue of it that Iran kept raising the price. The less noise we make about it this time, the lower the price."

He also said the kidnapers obviously want publicity, and denying it may discourage future incidents.

Actions and Rhetoric

Reagan's handling of the Lebanon kidnappings also contrasts his actions with his rhetoric. Reagan had promised on Jan. 27, 1981—at a ceremony welcoming the hostages home from Iran—that the United States would not tolerate such terrorist abuses in his Administration.

"Let the terrorists beware that when the rules of international behavior are violated, our policy will be one of swift and effective retribution," Reagan declared. He

repeated his threats of retaliation after several of the terrorist bombings of American facilities in Beirut that killed hundreds of Americans.

But there never has been retaliation. Subjected to threats, kidnappings, and murder, the vast majority of the Americans once in Lebanon have left and those who remain exercise great caution for their safety.

Robert H. Kupperman, an expert on terrorism at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies, said in an interview that Reagan made a mistake in promising retaliation and that his current approach is the best one.

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"I don't think he should have said anything," Kupperman said in an interview. "I think the President of the United States has learned a great deal about what he can and can't do. It's easy to criticize when you are not in office."

Kupperman said the Reagan Administration should also be discreet in talking about retaliating to terrorist incidents, although he is "quite convinced that we will" someday. He said the frequent statements by Secretary of State George P. Shultz on the need for retaliation are ill-advised because they might build public expectations and lead to disasters.

"You don't want to screw up," Kupperman said. "If you lose a few lives, people will understand. But if all the hostages are killed and a lot of the attackers are blown up, you are in much worse shape." He said situations where innocent persons might be killed should also be avoided.

Unsure on Retaliation

In a recent interview with radio correspondents, Reagan said "one of the things that has kept us from retaliation" is that the Administration doesn't know who is holding the hostages or where they are being held.

The State Department terrorist expert said that in seeking release of the hostages, the United States works with the Lebanese authorities and the Syrians, who have helped gain the release of some Americans in the past, and also with as many of the different militias and other factions in Leba-

non as it can.

But he conceded, "We are pretty much groping in the dark."

He said officials aren't even certain whether the five Americans are being held in West Beirut or the Bekaa Valley. Nor is it known, he said, whether the five are being held by one or more groups or even whether any two of the hostages are being held in the same place.

However, the official said most suspicion centers on the terrorist groups involved with the family of Hussein Moussawi. He said these groups, some headed by family members, are also believed to be involved in the other major terrorist actions in the region and that they probably have some connection with Iran, and possibly with Syria as well.

But he said U.S. intelligence agencies, despite Herculean efforts, have been unsuccessful in penetrating these groups or obtaining definitive information on them. "In order to do that, you would have to be a member of the family and a radical fundamentalist . . . (Shia)," he said.